30 August 1999

Original: English

Committee on Conferences
Substantive session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Koji F. X. **Yamagiwa** (Japan)

IV. Organizational matters

A. Membership

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 43/222 B of 21 December 1988, had decided to retain the Committee on Conferences as a permanent subsidiary organ. Pursuant to the provisions of that resolution in 1999, the Committee was composed of the following Member States: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Benin, Chile, Fiji, France, Gabon, Georgia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, Nepal, Russian Federation, United States of America.

B. Officers

2. The Committee elected the following officers to serve in 1999:

Chairman: Peter Van De Velde (Belgium)

Vice-Chairmen: Djamel Moktefi (Algeria)
Alvaro Jara (Chile)
Vano Matchavariani (Georgia)

Rapporteur: Koji F. X. Yamagiwa (Japan)

3. At its organizational session for 1999 (416th meeting), on 21 April 1999, the Committee agreed in principle that the Chairman would undertake informal consultations with a view to determining the composition of the Committee's Bureau in 2000.

C. Organization of work

4. At its 416th meeting, the Committee agreed to meet as required to take up matters related to the calendar of conferences and its implementation, in particular the consideration of inter-sessional departures from the approved calendar. At the same meeting, the Committee requested the Secretariat to submit a draft agenda for 2000 at the organizational session to be held early in 2000. The Committee also considered the issue of participation of observers in the work of the Committee, as decided at the 413th meeting, on 4 September 1998, during its substantive session. Since no consensus was reached on the matter, the Committee decided to defer consideration of this item to its next meeting.

5. The Committee met on 24 June 1999 (417th meeting) to consider the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings of subsidiary organs of the Economic and Social Council for 2000–2001, and to discuss the issue of the participation of observers in the work of the Committee. Prior to the formal meeting, the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences held informal consultations with interested members of the Committee on the subject of observers,

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during which members expressed the view that more information was needed on the practice and experience of other subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly on the issue of observers. At its 417th meeting, on 23 June 1999, the Committee decided to add an item to the agenda for its substantive session of 1999, entitled "Participation of observers", and requested the Secretariat to prepare a conference room paper on the subject that would include information on any formal or informal procedures, practices and experiences of subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly relating to the participation of observers. The Committee convened its substantive session from 30 August to __ September 1999 (418th to __ meetings).

D. Programme of work

6. At its organizational session for 1998, on 14 April 1998, the Committee had requested the Secretariat to submit to it, at its organizational session for 1999, a draft agenda for 1999, which was subsequently issued in document A/AC.172/1999/L.1 and adopted by the Committee (A/AC.172/1999/1 and Add.1).

7. The Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services addressed the Committee at the opening of its organizational and substantive sessions.

8. At the opening meeting of its substantive session, on 30 August 1999, the Committee agreed to delete agenda item 2 (b) (iv), "Cost accounting system for conference services", since it had been indicated earlier that the report requested was subject to extensive consultations within the Secretariat and was not available, and agenda item 2 (b) (v), "Subsidiary bodies authorized to meet away from their established headquarters in accordance with section I, paragraph 4, of General Assembly resolution 40/243", since no changes to the current pattern had been received.

9. As proposed by the Secretariat, the Committee also agreed to consider the draft medium-term plan contained in document A/AC.172/1999/CRP.7 under the item "Other business" if time permitted during the current session. In response to a concern raised on problems related to access to the optical disk system, it was decided to add a new sub-item, entitled "Access to the optical disk system", under agenda item 3 (d), "Continuous development, maintenance and enrichment of United Nations Web sites", although the two items were not directly related. Since it was a technological issue, a representative from the Secretariat would be requested to address the Committee on the afternoon of Wednesday, 1 September 1999.

10. At an informal meeting, on 26 August 1999, the Secretariat briefed members of the Committee on Conferences on matters related to the work of the Committee in the context of the agenda for the substantive session of 1999, and answered questions from delegations. On 31 August 1999, the members of the Committee on Conferences held joint consultations with conference services at Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, using video-conference arrangements. Members welcomed the efforts of the Secretariat in the two endeavours, which substantially assisted the Committee in its work.

11. At its 418th meeting, on 30 August 1999, the Committee took the decision to request the Secretariat to convene a briefing for members prior to its substantive session of 2000.

V. Work of the Committee during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, from 9 September to 18 December 1998

12. The Committee was seized with the following request:

Committee	*Request*	*Action taken*
Committee on Information	To reconvene a resumed session at Headquarters during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly	Recommended to the General Assembly that it grant an exception to section I, paragraph 7, of Assembly resolution 40/243, thereby authorizing the Committee on Information to meet at Headquarters during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Koji F. X. **Yamagiwa** (Japan)

I. Calendar of conferences and meetings

A. Matters related to, and inter-sessional departures from, the approved calendar for 1999

Introduction and overview

1. In its resolution 53/208 A of 18 December 1998, the General Assembly had approved the draft revised calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 1999 as submitted by the Committee on Conferences to the Assembly at its fifty-third session[1] and amended by subsequent decisions taken by the Assembly during that session.

2. At its 373rd meeting, on 26 August 1994, the Committee had decided that requests for inter-sessional departures submitted to the Committee should, in future, be reviewed by the Bureau, in consultation with the Secretariat, for subsequent action.

3. At its 379th meeting, on 23 March 1995, the Committee had agreed that proposed changes to the calendar that did not have programme budget implications could be dealt with by the Secretariat in consultation with the Bureau of the Committee.

4. At its substantive session of 1995, the Committee had decided that requests for inter-sessional departures submitted to the Committee that involved a change of venue should be referred to the members for approval. Departures that involved other types of changes should, as the Committee had decided at its substantive session of 1994, be reviewed by the Bureau, in consultation with the Secretariat, for subsequent action.

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 32*, annexes I and IV.

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5. The nature of the requests for a change of venue submitted in 1999 and the action taken by the Committee are as follows:

Organ	*Request*	*Action taken*
Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters	To convene its thirty-third session from 20 to 22 January 1999 at Geneva rather than New York so as to give members an opportunity to confer with participants in the Conference on Disarmament. Moreover, the Geneva venue would enable members, in their capacity as Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, to carry out their role of overseeing the Institute in close contact with its offices and personnel	Request approved
International Civil Service Commission	To convene its forty-ninth session, from 12 to 30 April 1999 at Geneva, rather than New York, since the Commission last met at Geneva in 1990, and considering that it is the headquarters of almost half of the common system organizations it is important for the Commission to meet at Geneva from time to time	Request approved
Expert group meeting on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia	To convene in April 1999 at Geneva, rather than New York, since a comparison of the travel and per diem costs between the two venues proves that Geneva is more cost-effective given that the experts would be travelling from Central Asia	Request approved
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development meeting of governmental experts of landlocked and transit-developing countries, representatives of donor-countries and financial development institutions	To convene in New York from 23 to 26 August 1999, rather than Geneva, to ensure adequate participation, since only a very limited number of landlocked and transit developing countries have missions at Geneva but virtually all of them are represented in New York	Request approved
United Nations Environment Programme/High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials	To convene at Bonn on 1 November 1999, rather than Nairobi, in conjunction with the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, from 25 October to 5 November 1999, pursuant to Governing Council decision 19/32 of 4 April 1997, which states that the High-Level Committee of Ministers and Officials shall meet at least once a year at Nairobi. Meetings of the Committee may be convened elsewhere by its Chairperson, in consultation with its Bureau, in connection with major international environmental meetings	Request approved